

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 2nd February 2005
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/2385/04/F - Girton
Erection of Ten Stables for Livery Use
at Beckbrook Equestrian Centre, Oakington Road
for Mr. S. Brown**

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval
Date for Determination: 19th January 2005**

Site and Proposal

1. This site lies at the northern end of Girton village on the Oakington Road. The site lies in flat open countryside that is within the Green Belt and is identified as having a high flood risk by the Environment Agency. It is adjacent to the Beck Brook and comprises 10 hectares of paddocks, including existing ménage, lunge pit, 21 stables, barn, house and access. The site is operating on a full livery basis, although D.I.Y. livery has operated on the site until the current owners purchased the land last year. The buildings on site are all sited in a complex at the southern end of the site, set back from the road and partially screened by a tree plantation to the road frontage. Buildings at the southern end of the site are visible heading north out of the village, and are partially screened by a 2m high timber fence. The western boundary, to the road frontage, is marked with a high hedge, blocking views into the site from the road and north. The access point crosses a footpath and cycle path. It is within a 40mph zone, with good visibility in both directions.
2. The full application received on 24th November 2004, proposes to erect ten additional stables and associated hardstanding areas. These are to be of a traditional design with a low ridge height of 3 metres. They will be located in three areas of the site. Three stables will extend an existing block of stables in the southern part of the site. Two blocks on an area currently laid out as a lunge pit are proposed, comprising a smaller block of two stables to the south and five stable in a block to the east. The application also includes car parking proposals within the site.

Planning History

3. Planning permission for equestrian use of the land was first granted in 1992. Since that time the business has developed with a number of planning applications for additional stabling facilities, living accommodation, exercise yard and improved access. More recently planning permission was granted for a partial change of use from equestrian use to incorporate a D1 use, allowing the site to also be used as a riding school (ref. **S/1935/03/F**). The current owners then applied last year for ten additional stables for livery (ref. **S/1138/04/F**). The application was withdrawn to enable the owners to commission a Flood Risk Assessment, which is now required and to prepare a detailed car parking and access arrangement, as the plan submitted was not sufficiently detailed. The current application was submitted with this information and is otherwise identical.

Planning Policy

4. **Policy GB2 (General principles)** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (“The Local Plan”) sets out what is considered by the Council to be appropriate development in the Green Belt. It includes buildings providing essential facilities for outdoor sports and recreation. **Policy GB3 (The location of development)** goes on to state that where development ‘is not inappropriate it will be located within or adjoining existing complexes...in order to protect the rural nature and openness of the Green Belt’.
5. **Policy TP1 (Planning for More Sustainable Travel)** of the Local Plan seeks to promote sustainable travel and as such planning permission will only be granted where small-scale increases in travel demands will result, unless satisfactory measures to increase accessibility are included. Standards for maximum car parking levels and requirements for cycle storage are found in Appendices 7/1 and 7/2.
6. **Policy CS5 (Flood Protection)** of the Local Plan restricts development where it is likely to increase the risk of flooding unless it can be demonstrated that the effects can be overcome by appropriate alleviation and mitigation measures. This requirement is also found in policy **P/6/3 – Flood Defence** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 (“The Structure Plan”)
7. **Policy P1/2 (Environmental Restrictions on Development)** of the Structure Plan restricts development in the countryside to that which ‘can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location’.
8. **Policy P9/2a (Green Belt)** of the County Structure Plan sets out the aims of maintaining a Green Belt around Cambridge and limits all new development within the Green Belt unless required for ‘agriculture and forestry, outdoor sport, cemeteries, or other uses appropriate to the Green Belt’.
9. **Planning Policy Guidance 2 “Green Belts”** states that the construction of new buildings inside a Green belt is inappropriate unless it is for, amongst others, essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation which preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

Consultations

10. **Girton Parish Council** recommends refusal on the basis that it doubts that there will be a reduction in traffic (the traffic calculation fails to take account of visits by farriers, vets, staff, deliveries etc.) and is concerned about poor visibility of the road and lack of manoeuvrability on site. In view of the fact that the entrance is crossed by a cycle track, if the application is granted, consideration should also be given for proper street lighting around the entrance.
11. **The Environment Agency** has confirmed that, having considered the Flood Risk Assessment and application, it has no objection in principle to the development, subject to conditions on surface water drainage and pollution control. The site is above the highest recorded/modelled flood level.
12. **Local Highways Authority** – following the submission of a revised car parking layout, comments have been received stating that it is satisfied with the arrangement now proposed, which maintains the access road free from vehicles. Minor alterations to the layout of the car parking are recommended and amended drawings are due to be submitted by the applicant.

13. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** – the proposal has no significant impacts in terms of noise and environmental pollution.

Representations

14. The occupier of The Orchard, Oakington Road opposite the access to the site has objected to the proposals on grounds of traffic movements, manoeuvring in a confined area, insufficient car parking, road safety concerns, loss of views from their property, noise and traffic pollution. They are concerned that the scale of development now proposed is contrary to Green Belt restrictions, resulting in a loss of amenity and over-development. They are aware of two accidents having occurred on this stretch of road.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

15. Three issues to be considered in determining this planning application are the impact on the Green Belt, noise disturbance and pollution to neighbouring dwellings and highways matters.

Green Belt

16. The equestrian use of this site is, in my opinion, appropriate development in the Green Belt, providing essential facilities for outdoor recreation. The proposed stables are well related to the existing complex and are modest in size and height. They will not have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt and will not detract from the appearance or character of it.

Neighbouring Amenities

17. The site is not directly adjoined by residential properties, although there are dwellings set back on the opposite side of the road. The site is well screened from these by tree and hedge plantations. The Chief Environmental Health Officer has not raised concerns regarding noise or pollution and as such is reasonable to conclude that there will not be a significant reduction in the amenities of nearby dwellings. The buildings proposed will be screened from residential dwellings by existing buildings on the site and as such will not have a direct impact. Loss of views is not a material planning consideration.

Highways

18. The site benefits from an existing access onto Oakington Road. There is good visibility to both directions and the access is now located within a forty mile an hour speed restriction area. The applicant has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Highways Authority that adequate car parking and access arrangements can be achieved. The additional stables are unlikely to result in a significant increase in traffic hazards and therefore insufficient grounds for refusal on this basis exist.

Recommendation

19. Subject to the receipt of amended plans to the Local Highways Authority requirements, delegated powers are sought to approve the application, as amended by plans date stamped 4th February 2004, subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
 2. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
 4. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
 5. Sc60 – Details of boundary treatment (Rc60);
 6. Sc5f – Details of materials to be used for hard surfaced areas within the site including roads, driveways and car parking areas (Reason – To minimise disturbance to adjoining residents);
 7. Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of surface water drainage, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans.
REASON: To ensure a satisfactory method of surface water drainage.
 8. Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of pollution control, which shall include foul and surface water drainage, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans.
REASON: To ensure a satisfactory method of pollution control.
 9. There shall be no storage of any materials including soil or raising of ground levels within that part of the site liable to flood, as delineated on the attached plan.
REASON: To ensure that there will be no increased risk of flooding to other land/properties due to impedece of flood flows and/or reduction of flood storage capacity.
- + any conditions required by the Local Highways Authority.

Informatives

1. The Environment Agency will be pleased to assist in the assessment of proposals submitted by the applicant to meet these conditions.
2. Under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Land Drainage Byelaws, the prior written consent of the Agency is required for any proposed works or structures in, under, over or within 9.00 metres of the top of the bank of the main river (Beck Brook).
3. **The granting of planning permission must not be taken to imply that consent has been given in respect of the above.**
4. All surface water from roofs shall be piped direct to an approved surface water system using sealed downpipes. Open gullies should not be used.
5. If soakaways are proposed for the disposal of uncontaminated surface water, percolation tests should be undertaken, and soakaways designed and constructed in accordance with BRE Digest 365 (or CIRIA Report 156), and to the satisfaction of the Local Authority. The maximum depth acceptable for soakaways is 2 metres below existing ground level. If, after tests, it is found that soakaways do not work satisfactorily, alternative proposals must be submitted.
6. Only clean, uncontaminated surface water, should be discharged to any soakaway, watercourse or surface water sewer.

7. No foul sewage or effluent, including run-off from contaminated yards, manure heaps, stable washing and hay soaking, should be discharged to any surface water drainage system.
8. Liquid and solid animal/vegetable wastes and associated contaminated waters shall be stored and disposed of in a manner that will not lead to pollution of surface or underground waters.
9. Manure heaps should not be located within 10m of any ditch or watercourse or within 50m of a well, borehole or spring.
10. The applicant must ensure that there is no discharge of effluent from the site to any watercourse or surface water drain or sewer.

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003: P1/2** (Environmental Restrictions on Development), **P/6/3** (Flood Defence) and **P9/2a** (Green Belt).
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: GB2** (General principles), **GB3** (The location of development) **TP1 (Planning for More Sustainable Travel)** and **CS5** (Flood Protection).
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Residential amenity
 - Highway safety
 - Visual impact on the Green Belt

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning files Ref. S/2385/04/F, S/1138/04/F and S/1935/03/F

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